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Addendum

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President's summary

UNCTAD contributions to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields

(Agenda item 12)

1. Under the agenda item, a high-level panel, comprising the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Kenya Power Lighting Company and the Co-Founder of Enekio (France), discussed transformational energy access in the least developed countries.

2. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD, in his opening remarks, highlighted that energy was an enabler of structural transformation. Realizing the ambitions of Sustainable Development Goal 7 required identification of actionable tasks and measurable results for investment, access and provision of better quality. There was a widening electricity divide between the least developed countries and other developing/developed economies, which underscored that progress in the least developed countries would largely determine whether Goal 7 would be achieved or not.

3. The first panellist stated that Sustainable Development Goal 7 was the "golden thread" that linked other Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Paris Agreement. She noted the substantial gap in financing transformational energy access, urging the international community to continue deliberating on financing for sustainable development. She also called for a strengthening of technology transfer to the least developed countries, including through more effective international support measures.

4. The next panellist, recalling a ministerial statement on the reform of fossil fuel subsidies at the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, called for renewing international efforts to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and redirect resources towards renewable energy. Based on the experience of the Republic of Moldova, he highlighted the importance of market-driven measures to spur transition towards cleaner energy sources and greater energy efficiency.

5. The next panellist highlighted relevant lessons for the least developed countries, based on the experience of Kenya. He stressed the importance of a diversified power generation mix and of decentralized power generation. He highlighted the objectives of the country's affirmative action for energy access, arguing that aid and public resources remained critical for subsidizing last-kilometre grid connection. Finally, he called for better harnessing of South–South cooperation and regional power pools.

6. The last panellist stated that different actors used distinct strategies to deliver significant economic impact in energy access. Drawing on the experience in rural Senegal of the company Enekio, he highlighted the importance of simultaneously acting on energy supply and demand, engaging local communities. Well-designed mini-grids were capable of providing electricity at the same price as in Dakar, achieving profitability also in remote areas. The panellist cautioned, however, that guarantees from regional development banks played a key role.

7. The representative of one regional group and several delegates commended UNCTAD for its work on transformational energy access, arguing that the work would be an important contribution to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development. They concurred with the call for strengthening measures to promote technology transfer. Another regional group noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should not be implemented selectively. The least developed countries could also do more to mobilize domestic resources. Some panellists noted that, while the Sustainable Development Goals constituted a single framework, energy still played a fundamental role in enabling development and powering structural transformation.

8. One panellist noted that the complexity of Sustainable Development Goal 7 demonstrated the need for the ongoing reform of the United Nations development system to meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda. In response to a request for clarification by one delegate, she said there would be detailed briefings with delegations and country teams, while the precise working of a hybrid funding mechanism would require consideration.